

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

THEMATIC REVIEW: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Policing and Children and Young People

Introduction

The Policing Board as part of its continuing duty to monitor PSNI's compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and to ensure fair, effective and efficient policing of all people in Northern Ireland has identified policing with children and young people as a priority for the Human Rights Advisor.

The Policing Board carried out its first review¹ focussing on children and young people in 2011, with an update published in 2013², following a series of engagements with NGOs and young people themselves. The review at that time focussed on a range of areas informed by these engagements; anti-social behaviour; dispersal policy and practices; and alternatives such as restorative justice.

Recent discussions at Performance Committee and with NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) and Childrens Law Centre have informed the terms of reference below.

Terms of Reference

It is anticipated that this report will consider and assess PSNI's compliance with relevant human rights and equality legislation in how it deals with children and young people and, their use of powers, in particular:

- As victims, potential victims or the children of victims:
 - Children at risk of child sexual abuse and criminal exploitation.

- As people of interest, suspects or defendants:
 - Interactions with children and young people on the street and other encounters;
 - Questioning in public places;

¹ [human-rights-thematic-enquiry-children-young-people.pdf \(nipoicingboard.org.uk\)](http://nipoicingboard.org.uk/human-rights-thematic-enquiry-children-young-people.pdf)

² [Policing With Children and Young People November 2013 - UPDATE | Northern Ireland Policing Board \(nipoicingboard.org.uk\)](http://nipoicingboard.org.uk/policing-with-children-and-young-people-november-2013-update)

- Stop and search (PACE, Misuse of Drugs, JSA and TACT);
 - Use of force (including Spit and Bite Guards, dogs, CED, etc.);
 - As covert human intelligence sources (CHIS);
 - Arrest, custody and bail;
 - Charging, prosecution and other disposals/outcomes; and
 - Data collection.
- The research will assess any differences in approach of the PSNI in relation to various section 75 groups:
 - Ethnic minority membership;
 - LGBTQIA+;
 - Those without citizenship or a right to reside, including unaccompanied children seeking asylum;
 - Females;
 - Those with disabilities, mental health illness;
 - Travellers;
 - Children and young people in care;
 - CNR and PUL communities;
 - Historic or present allegations;
 - Explore data held by PSNI and the EA where police interact with schools/educational settings; and
 - Whether the alleged perpetrator is a relative or other close or responsible adult.
- Consideration will be given to:
 - PSNI's Children and Young People Strategy³. The Board are mindful that implementation of this Strategy is at an early stage and it is within this context that the thematic will proceed and it is hoped that findings in this report will assist;
 - PSNI Training;
 - PSNI Policies/Guidance/Service Instructions (formal and informal);
 - Resources;

³ [Children and Young People Strategy | PSNI](#)

- Operations;
- How different departments in PSNI work together, i.e. safeguarding, youth diversion scheme.

- Evidence will be sought from:
 - Written material;
 - PSNI and other research/statistics resources, such as Department of Justice, Youth Justice Agency, Juvenile Justice Centre - benchmarking with other police services;
 - Statutory Children's Rights Bodies i.e. NI Commission for Children and Young People;
 - Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); and
 - Children and Young People themselves, via relevant organisations working directly with those who have / had experience of policing.

Timescale

With Committee agreement it is hoped that this review can be drafted during the autumn with the aim of publishing in Spring 2024.

Opportunities for Engagement

This report will provide the Board with an opportunity to engage with a wide range of key stakeholders working in this sector, as well as seeking to hear from the children and young people themselves. Key NGOs/statutory bodies/charitable organisations with an interest in issues relating to children and young people will be invited to make submissions to the report.

Submissions can be sent to performancecommittee@nipolicingboard.org.uk and are open until 31 December 2023.

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